



This week a dangerous biotech rider was removed from the Continuing Appropriations Act of 2014 – the short-term funding bill that ended the government shutdown and headed off a financial default. The Senate passed this bill on Wednesday, October 16, by a vote of 81 to 18.

The biotech rider was originally inserted into an appropriations bill that was adopted this past spring, and that expired on September 30, 2013. I fought to strike this language back in March, and I am proud to have voted Wednesday night for the Continuing Appropriations Act that ends this dangerous provision. The rider sought to undermine the judicial review of transgenic crops by shielding biotech companies from lawsuits related to GE crops.

I oppose reducing our courts' authority to review GE cases, particularly since there remain many unknowns about the full impact of GE crops on the environment. The release of GE seeds can result in increased herbicide tolerance as well as cross-pollination and contamination of non-GE crops, infringing on hard-won organic certifications and interfering with conventional farmers who choose not to plant GE crops.

Rather than supporting a policy of blanket deregulation, I believe we need to focus on comprehensive testing and labeling of GE food products. Consumer information is important to families and to the marketplace, and I have always believed that Americans have the right to make well-informed choices about the food that they buy. This is why I have cosponsored Senator Barbara Boxer's Genetically Engineered Food Right-to-Know Bill, which would require the Food and Drug Administration to clearly label GE foods.

Sincerely,

PATRICK LEAHY
United States Senator